

texas parks & wildlife news

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78744

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EDITORS: There will be no fishing report this week. The report will resume the week of April 5.

PUBLIC HEARINGS SET FOR GAME REGULATIONS

AUSTIN -- The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has scheduled public hearings during April to obtain public comment on proposed changes for 1988-89 hunting and fishing seasons. The public is urged to attend the hearings and comment on the proposals.

If adopted by the Parks and Wildlife Commission in its May 12 public hearing, the changes would become effective Sept. 1, 1988.

Additional information may be obtained by calling toll-free 1-800-792-1112, ext. 4974, or (512) 389-4974.

Below is a list of the hearings, listed alphabetically by county. All hearings begin at 7 p.m.:

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Angelina	April 18	Commissioners Courtroom 213 Co. Courthouse, Lufkin
Aransas	April 20	Co. Courthouse, Rockport
Bexar	April 19	Naval Reserve Center Rm. 219 3837 Binz-Englemann Rd.

		San Antonio
Bowie	April 21	Co Courthouse, New Boston
Brazos	April 19	Co Courthouse, Bryan
Brewster	April 20	Co Courthouse, Alpine
Brooks	April 20	Courthouse Annex, Falfurrias
Brown	April 19	Co Courthouse, Brownwood
Cameron	April 19	Co Courthouse, Brownsville
Colorado	April 18	Co Courthouse, Columbus
Culberson	April 19	Dist Courtroom
		Co Courthouse, Van Horn
Dallas-Tarrant	April 19	Dallas Co Government Center
		Grand Prairie
El Paso	April 18	Executive Suite, 1170 Westmoreland
		El Paso
Galveston	April 20	Jury Assembly Room
		Co Courthouse, Galveston
Gillespie	April 20	Co Courthouse, Fredericksburg
Grayson	April 21	Assembly Room, Co Courthouse
		Sherman
Hardin	April 20	88th Dist Courtroom
		Co Courthouse, Kountze
Hale	April 19	Commissioners Courtroom, 1st Floor
		Co Courthouse, Plainview
Harris	April 18	Old Co Courthouse Bldg
		LaPorte
Houston	April 19	Co Courtroom
		Co Courthouse, Crockett
Jefferson	April 18	Jury Empaneling Room
		Co Courthouse, Beaumont
LaSalle	April 18	Co Courthouse, Cotulla
Live Oak	April 19	Co Courthouse, George West
Lubbock	April 18	Commissioners Courtroom
		1st Floor, Co Courthouse
		Lubbock
McLennan	April 19	Parks & Wildlife Ofc
		1601 E Crest, Waco
Matagorda	April 18	Small Dist Courtroom, 2nd Floor
		Co Courthouse, Bay City
Midland	April 18	J P Courtroom
		Co Courthouse, Midland
Nueces	April 21	A&M Extension Center, Hwy 44
		Corpus Christi
Orange	April 19	128th District Courtroom
		Co Courthouse, Orange
Panola	April 18	Co Courthouse, Carthage
Pecos	April 21	Small Community Bldg
		Ft Stockton
Potter	April 20	Commissioners Courtroom
		4th Floor, Co Courthouse
		Amarillo
San Jacinto	April 20	Co Courthouse, Coldspring

Smith	April 19	Central Jury Room Co Courthouse, Tyler
Stonewall	April 19	Commissioners Courtroom Co Courthouse, Aspermont
Taylor	April 18	Commissioners Courtroom 2nd Floor New County Courthouse Abilene
Tom Green	April 19	J P Courtroom, 122 W Harris San Angelo
Travis	April 18	Commission Hearing Room Parks & Wildlife Complex 4200 Smith School Rd , Austin
Tyler	April 19	County Courtroom Co Courthouse, Woodville
Val Verde	April 20	Dink Wardlow Ag Complex 300 E 17th St , Del Rio
Victoria	April 19	Town Plaza Mall, 1502 Airline Victoria
Webb	April 21	Laredo Civic Center, Rm 4 Laredo
Wichita	April 18	Northwest Texas Field & Stream Bldg 2005 S W Parkway, Wichita Falls
Zavala	April 21	Co Courthouse, Crystal City

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VAGABOND WHOOPING CRANES
STILL WANDERING

AUSTIN -- Two young whooping cranes that never made it to the main flock's wintering area on the Texas coast still are maintaining their solitary ways, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

One of the endangered cranes was sighted in west-central Oklahoma on March 14, after spending most of the winter near Edna, Texas "This young whooper spent the previous winter in Oklahoma," said Dr Bruce Thompson, endangered species program leader, "so it has spent its first two winters away from the coastal areas traditionally used by whoopers each winter "

Interestingly, the March 14 sighting was within three miles of the area used by the bird in 1986-87, Thompson said. "These observations continue to show that some whoopers have ability to pioneer the use of new areas and survive for long periods of time in those areas," he said, adding that this ability may be beneficial for long-range recovery of the endangered species.

There has been no news since mid-January about a second young whooper that spent several months in parts of the Texas Panhandle. However, wildlife officials anticipate future sightings of the bird which already has survived several severe storms this winter. The bird has been using habitat where there had been no confirmed reports of whoopers since the early 1970s, Thompson said.

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WILDLIFE LOSSES MINIMAL
AFTER RANGE FIRE

ALBANY -- Air and ground surveys of more than 200,000 acres burned in a range fire in North Central Texas last week indicate losses of wildlife apparently were minimal.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologist Larry Holland of Brownwood said most species, including white-tailed deer, turkey and quail survived the fire which caused an estimated \$4 million in damages to crops and property in Shackelford, Callahan and Throckmorton Counties.

"Wildlife species found in this area evolved in an ecosystem where range fires were common," Holland said. In fact, Holland noted that while the fire brought economic hardship to ranching and farming interests in the area, it could have beneficial effects for wildlife in the long term. "Native forbs and weeds are actually stimulated by fire," the biologist said. "Those plant species, which are utilized heavily by wildlife, will sprout more quickly than grasses if there is enough rainfall after the fire. Fire also adds potassium to the soil, which also makes it more productive."

Holland said that with proper range and wildlife management, burning during the late winter period can benefit wildlife. "Controlled burning is a well-accepted management practice, and it was in a way fortunate that the range fire occurred at just the time when it could have some benefits," said Holland, adding that ground-nesting birds such as quail and turkey had not yet begun to nest.

Department crews conducted roadside counts, night spotlight counts and aerial surveys to assess damages. Holland said that within a 250,000-acre area generally affected by the fire, about 50,000 acres were unburned, forming "islands" where wildlife species could seek food and cover. "We saw deer moving out into the burned-over area, already feeding on the newly-sprouted forbs," Holland said.

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TPWD CREWS STOCK 1,012
DEER IN EAST TEXAS

AUSTIN -- The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's largest deer-trapping operation in more than 40 years resulted in 1,012 whitetails being stocked at nine wildlife management areas in East Texas during February

Charles Winkler, big game program director, said the animals were captured with drive nets and net guns from four South Texas ranches that had surplus deer

The deer, mostly females, were released at nine Type II areas to increase deer populations on the areas Winkler said the combination of restocking and habitat improvement should increase deer densities

Deer hunting was allowed on the areas during the 1987-88 seasons, on a bucks-only basis

The largest group of deer, about 300 animals, was released in Anderson and Cherokee Counties Other counties stocked were Jasper-Newton, 147, Newton, 100, Sabine-San Augustine, 136, Hardin-Tyler, 110, Hardin, 54, Rusk-Nacogdoches, 55, Hardin-Tyler, 49, and Liberty, 48

Permits for hunting Type II management areas will go on sale this summer A \$35 permit enables its holder to hunt on any or all Type II lands, which last season amounted to more than 430,000 acres A map booklet issued to the permit purchaser gives locations of all the Type II

units as well as complete rules and regulations

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CRAPPIE FISHING EXCELLENT
AT SOMERVILLE PARK

CALDWELL -- Visitors to the Birch Creek Unit of Lake Somerville State Park are catching 25-crappie limits while bankfishing at the popular state park

Superintendent David Tait said crappie fishing during the past few weeks has been the best in the past five years. "They are catching crappie up to 14 inches long from the rock jetty at night," Tait said, adding that the fish apparently have moved into shallow water to spawn

He said good catches also are being made in sloughs and inlets around the state park shoreline of the 11,000-acre lake

Lake Somerville State Park is located in Burleson and Lee Counties, 15 miles northwest of Brenham on State Highway 36. The Birch Creek unit may be reached by calling (409) 535-7763

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MANDATORY HUNTER EDUCATION
PROGRAM TO START JUNE 1

AUSTIN -- The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's mandatory hunter education program, affecting hunters born on or after Sept 2, 1971, will begin June 1

Officials said age groups affected by the program will be phased in during a five-year period. It will be enforced starting Sept 1, 1989 for hunters whose date of birth is during the period Sept 2, 1971 through Aug 31, 1973. Hunters in that age group will be required to have proof of certification.

Steve Hall, hunter education coordinator, said the program's overall goal is to reduce hunting accidents and violations. This is to be done through promotion of safe firearm handling and operation, muzzleloading and archery safety, survival, ethical and responsible actions, hunting regulations, field exercises and, whenever possible, live-firing exercises.

"Hunter education also gives the student an understanding of wildlife conservation, management and identification, perpetuating a sense of stewardship," said Hall.

Hall said everyone is encouraged to take the course regardless of mandatory regulations, and parents are urged to attend the course to develop the family's appreciation of the outdoors.

Those interested in teaching the program are encouraged to apply by calling toll-free 1-800-792-1112, or (512) 389-4999. Applicants must be 21 years of age or older, and must have taken the student course

To be certified as an instructor, the applicant must complete an application, interview with a local game warden and attend an instructors course including orientation to the program and teaching skills information

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TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT
MANDATORY HUNTER EDUCATION COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WHO MUST ATTEND: Hunters whose date of birth is on or after September 2, 1971
*Any individual may take the course on a voluntary basis and is encouraged to attend regardless of requirements.

WHEN DOES THE PROGRAM START: June 1, 1988

WHEN IS CERTIFICATION REQUIRED:

- Effective September 1, 1989 - Hunters whose date of birth is during the period September 2, 1971 through August 31, 1973 must have successfully completed the course to hunt in Texas
- Effective September 1, 1990 - Hunters whose date of birth is during the period September 2, 1971 through August 31, 1974 must have successfully completed the course to hunt in Texas
- Effective September 1, 1991 - Hunters whose date of birth is during the period September 2, 1971 through August 31, 1975 must have successfully completed the course to hunt in Texas
- Effective September 1, 1992 - Hunters whose date of birth is during the period September 2, 1971 through August 31, 1976 must have successfully completed the course to hunt in Texas
- Effective September 1, 1993 - All hunters who are at least 12 years of age and whose date of birth is on or after September 2, 1971 must have successfully completed the course to hunt in Texas

- WHO IS EXEMPT:
- Hunters whose date of birth is on or before September 1, 1971
 - Hunters who have been certified in the voluntary Texas Hunter Safety (Education) Program.
 - Hunters who have been certified through another state's resource agency (NOTE Check with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Hunter Education Section (512/389-4999) to determine whether a comparable course is acceptable or not.)
 - Hunters under 17 years of age whose date of birth is on or after September 2, 1971 when accompanied by a licensed hunter 17 years of age or older.

NOTE: Hunters under 12 years of age must be accompanied by a licensed hunter 17 years of age or older.

MINIMUM AGE: 12 years (Those under 12 may attend and receive recognition of attendance, but must retake the course after turning 12)

- SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION:
- Must attend a minimum of ten hours in two or more days
 - Must be evaluated by instructor as acceptable in knowledge, skill and attitude.
 - Minimum exam score - 70% on an examination prescribed by the Department.

- NOTE:
- Certification good for life and accepted in other states and Canadian provinces
 - All students receive a hunter education handbook, decal and patch.
 - Proof of certification is a department-prescribed card or temporary receipt which must be carried at all times while hunting with all firearms and archery equipment.

COURSE FEE: \$5.00, duplicate certification card \$2.00

COURSE TOPICS:

- Hunter Safety - At home, in transport, in the field, and at the range; all methods.
- Hunter Responsibility - Hunting laws and regulations, proper behavior, ethics, wildlife identification, survival, first aid, preparation, game and gun care, hunter orange, landowner rights, water safety
- Hunting Methods - Rifles, shotguns, handguns, muzzleloading, bowhunting, proper ammunition.
- Handling Skills - Positions, carries, field exercises, range procedures, zones-of-fire.
- Wildlife Management & Conservation - Basic concepts, agencies, history
- Sportsmanship - Stewardship, outdoor awareness, involvement

VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTOR'S REQUIREMENTS:

- Must have successfully completed student course.
- Must complete an application and be interviewed by a Department game warden
- Must attend a minimum eight-hour instructor training course

NOTE: Instructors certified in the voluntary Texas hunter safety education program are certified instructors for the mandatory program.

DECERTIFICATION OF INSTRUCTORS:

- The Department may decertify instructors for violating provisions of these regulations, falsification of records or documents, or for actions that are detrimental to the objectives of the program.

VIOLATION: Failure to carry proper certification while hunting constitutes a Class C, Parks and Wildlife Code Misdemeanor which is punishable by a fine not less than \$25.00 nor more than \$500.00.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT COURSES IN YOUR AREA:

Call or write your local Texas Parks & Wildlife office or the Austin headquarters at 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744, Attn: Hunter Education, 512/389-4999 or 1-800-792-1112

It is the policy of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department that all programs and facilities under its authority are open to the public, regardless of the individual's race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. Any person believing he/she has been discriminated against should write to: Director, Office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

This is a federally-assisted program.

W-104-S

Federal Aid

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service